

# WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**SUMMER 2018**

**Volume 19, Number 3**

## WHS Celebrates Six Decades With Spring Dinner and Program

By Cheryl Casey

In April of 1957, 24 men and women of the Waterbury community got together and founded the Waterbury Historical Society, with the purpose of “receiv[ing], preserv[ing] the records, relics, heirlooms, mementos...manuscripts, weapons...[having] some direct connection with the historical and/or cultural development of the township of Waterbury” (Bylaws).

In April of 2018, some 30 current members of the Historical Society got together at the Waterbury American Legion to reminisce about and celebrate over six decades of preservation projects, research, and community enrichment.

Following a pot roast dinner, emcee David Luce, a past president of the Historical Society, presented photos and stories submitted by members and culled from the archives. Several in attendance were the children of the Historical Society’s original members, and they shared their recollections of their parents’ passion for Waterbury.

Original documents from among the Historical Society’s first projects were put on display, including the Bylaws, which stipulated a membership fee of \$1 per year.

Current Historical Society President, Barb Farr, says that as the group looks to the next six decades, they are focused on ensuring that the vast resources in the archives are accessible to the large number of people “seeking a piece of their own past.” An initiative is currently in the works to make these archives searchable online.



## Ghost Walk Remembers 1918 Influenza

By Cheryl Casey

The 12th annual Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony and Ghost Walk took place in Hope Cemetery on Main Street. About 100 people attended the event on a gloriously sunny and clear Memorial Day morning.

Historical Society Board member Jan Gendreau once again organized the event, which was emceed by Paul Willard. Members of American Legion Post 59 lined up in full regalia to present arms. Ryan Fisher, a 7th grade student at Bishop Marshall

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**Above: The headstone for Nick Imbrulla, Jr., one of the youngest Waterbury victims of the Spanish Influenza.**

## Young Victim of Spanish Flu Still Cared For in Hope Cemetery

By Cheryl Casey

On October 10, 1918, 18-month-old Nick Imbruglia Jr. became the 21st Waterbury victim of the Spanish Influenza. Today, 100 years later, someone still tends to his gravesite, which he shares with his predeceased baby sibling.

According to Village Trustee and Waterbury history expert Skip Flanders, the Imbruglia family arrived in Waterbury between 1906 and 1907 from Sicily. Mr. Imbruglia was a stonecutter who worked at Daniels' Stone Shed; it is likely that he carved the stone for his son's grave.

Mr. and Mrs. Imbruglia, along with their three remaining sons, moved to California in 1922, leaving Baby and Nick Imbruglia Jr. as the only members of their clan tied to Waterbury. That is what presents the intriguing mystery of who still remembers and cares for the youngest members of this Sicilian immigrant family. Flanders remarked that when he first started preparing for his Ghost Walk presentation, the site stood bare; however, by Memorial Day, beautiful pink geraniums were blooming at the foot of the stone.

## WHS Partners with Revitalizing Waterbury to Redesign Train Station Community Room

By Cheryl Casey

Members of WHS, Revitalizing Waterbury, and the community at large gathered in the Waterbury Train Station on May 12 to celebrate the official reopening of the Community Room. The program included free coffee and cake, several short speeches, and a community welcome of the 10:10 a.m. Amtrak train.

Earlier this year, Revitalizing Waterbury selected the proposal submitted by WHS for the Community Room refresh. Jack Carter, WHS History Center Curator, led the project, which features historical items and photographs associated with Waterbury's train history.

Although the room's theme focuses on train history, a central feature of the new design is a mural painted by local artist Sarah-Lee Terrat. Once a highlight of the decor in the former Arvad's restaurant, the mural depicts a bustling 1930s Waterbury Main Street from the vantage of Bank Hill. A majority of the mural now hangs in the Community Room, with the rest intended for display in the Municipal Building.

In addition to the selected artifacts and photographs from the WHS archives, the Community Room holds informational brochures and maps for tourists. Many also come to see the working train model circling the room.

## Summer Saturdays Return at History Center

The History Center will maintain Open House hours on the last Saturday of every month, June—September, 12pm—4pm. Docents will be available to guide visitors through the collections and answer questions about our community.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact History Center Curator Jack Carter at 802-244-7409 or [empstowest@aol.com](mailto:empstowest@aol.com).



**Above: Jack Carter, Curator of the Waterbury History Center, presents the refreshed Community Room at the Waterbury Train Station.**

## New Members

**Camela Brunell**  
Berlin, VT

**Sam & Mary Miller**  
Waterbury Center, VT

**Cynthia Parks**  
Waterbury, VT

**Chris & Robin Pecor-Brunell**  
Waterbury, VT

**Kevin & Debbie Rogers**  
Waterbury Center, VT

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## Donations

**In memory of Lois Sabin** (21 separate donations)—\$1246.75

**Harold & Shirley Grout**—\$200.00

**Calvin Dow**—\$100.00

**Susan Chalmers**—\$25.00

**Theresa & Gordon Wood**—\$25.00

**Order of the Eastern Star**—\$25.00

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*The Waterbury Historical Society is deeply grateful to all who support the society through membership dues and donations. Welcome to all of our new members!*

# Waterbury Rail Art Project Makes Last Fundraising Push

**By Cheryl Casey**

Visitors to Waterbury often arrive via I-89 exit 10, which takes them down Route 100 South to the roundabout at the northern end of the Village. As they exit the roundabout, visitors drive under the railroad bridge, a veritable gateway to our picturesque and friendly downtown community.

What hasn't always been so picturesque is the railroad bridge itself. In an effort to align the look and feel of the downtown entrance with the charm of what lies beyond, a number of community partners established the Waterbury Rail Art Project (WRAP).

The primary collaborators in this project are Revitalizing Waterbury, Waterbury Rotary Club, American Legion Post 59, Town of Waterbury, Vermont Arts Council, and the New England Central Railroad. This group solicited proposals for a permanent work of

art to be installed on the railroad bridge.

Artist Philip Godenschwager's concept was chosen after a community vote. To implement the project, Revitalizing Waterbury is working to raise the last \$10,000 necessary through its [online Donately page](#).

Godenschwager's sculpture mixes some of Waterbury's most recognizable historical buildings with the town's train history. According to Revitalizing Waterbury, the buildings will be presented as train cars pulled by a locomotive. Soft lights will illuminate the aluminum sculpture from behind to create a warm, welcoming glow. The 9-foot train engine is currently on display at the Stowe Street Emporium.

To donate, either click the link in this article or go to Revitalizing Waterbury's web page, [www.revitalizingwaterbury.org](http://www.revitalizingwaterbury.org), to access the Donately page.



**Above: Artist Philip Godenschwager presents his concept for the train sculpture that will soon be installed on the railroad bridge at the northern entrance to downtown Waterbury. Opposite, clockwise from top left: portions of the train sculpture in progress; an example of what the sculpture will look like when lit.**



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**NEXT MEETING OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**  
***Summer Potluck Picnic and Program***  
**July 25, 2018, 6 p.m.**  
**Hope Davey Pavilion**  
**Featuring the Music of WDEV**



The Program Committee is pleased to welcome Steve Cormier, the new General Manager of WDEV, to talk about the future of the radio station, and deejay Joel Nashman, who will play favorite tunes from such WDEV standard artists as Radio Rangers, Pony Boys, and Banjo Dan.

The potluck picnic will begin at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to share. Dessert, water, and iced tea will be provided. The program will start at 7:00 p.m.

# Spanish Influenza is Theme of Annual Ghost Walk

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School, presented a reading.

The program took on a slightly different structure this year, with Jim Walton opening the presentation with an overview of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic and its impact. Following this summary, attendees split into three groups to visit identified locations throughout the cemetery.

Village Trustee Skip Flanders stood amongst several gravestones marking local victims of the so-called "Spanish Influenza" and spoke to what life was like in Waterbury during the month of October 2018. Sixty-two residents were taken ill and died, their ages ranging from mere months to 83 years old.

In another corner of the cemetery, Rosina Wallace, whose family farm has sat on Blush Hill for five generations, recounted the courage and tenacity with which her great-grandmother, Florence Wallace, kept the family and the farm together following her husband James Wallace's death from the flu.

Across the way, Brian Lindner presented Dr. Watson Wasson, former superintendent of the Vermont State Hospital. During the influenza outbreak, Dr. Wasson eventually become the only physician at the hospital still able to tend to patients. Never deterred, Dr. Wasson ceaselessly cared for both his patients and employees until he, too, fell ill. After taking 23 patients, the flu then took Dr. Wasson's life in November of 1918.

Video clips of these presentations will be available on the WHS website by the end of the summer.

**Right: Members of the American Legion Firing Squad give a rifle salute in Hope Cemetery at the annual Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony, before the Historical Society's Ghost Walk program.**

## Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

Cheryl, an excellent article you wrote about centenarian, Florilla Perkins Ames. About 1935, lawyer Ernest Perkins built a new house on Maple Street, two houses from the Dow home. He moved from the North Hill Perkins Farm to Maple Street with his new Boston bride. What relation was he to Florilla Perkins A.?

Jack's good article recalled that my brother Sam and I used Derby & Ball bats from 1934 to 1938 with the Waterbury High baseball team. Then wintertime found us on Mt. Mansfield, skiing the famous Nose Dive Trail on Derby & Ball skis.

*Your Connecticut Member,  
Calvin Dow*

*From the Editor:*

*Florilla Perkins Ames is sister to Ernest Perkins. Ernest resided on Maple Street with his wife, Harriet, of Newton, Massachusetts, and his daughter, Mary Jane.*

*According to an obituary published in the September 17, 1954 edition of the Burlington Free Press, Ernest died suddenly in his home at the age of 48. Cause of death was attributed to a heart ailment. In addition to Florilla, Ernest was survived at the time by his wife, daughter, mother Ida, and brother George.*



# Meeting Minutes, April 25, 2018

American Legion Hall, 5:30 p.m. —Respectfully Submitted by Jack Carter, Secretary

The annual meeting was preceded at 5:30 PM by a roast beef dinner with 45 members and public attending. After the dinner 5 additional people attended the meeting and program.

The meeting commenced at 6:30, Barbara Farr, presiding

Treasurer Paul Willard reported on the financial status of the society and presented the 2018 budget. Theresa Wood questioned the lack of a balanced budget. Paul will research her query. The report and budget was approved.

Barb gave an overview of the past year's business of the Society in particular the work being done with PastPerfect and entering our collection in the database.

Jane Willard reported on the nomination committee. The following were elected to fill offices and terms: Director Jack Carter (2021), Vice President Jim Walton (2020), Secretary Cheryl Casey (2020). Anne Imhoff and Josette Metayer were nominated from the floor to serve on the Program Committee. Lindy Boudreau and Nancy Murphy, who are leaving the Program Committee, were thanked for their service.

Curator Jack Carter reported that in the past year the 18<sup>th</sup> century Abel Hutchins/Amasa Pride tall clock that is in the front meeting room of the Janes House has been totally rehabilitated. Jan Gendreau led the effort and she was thanked her determination to have it rehabilitated. Bill Shepeluk was also thanked for his weekly winding of the time piece and keeping it on time. The other project is the refresh of the community room at the Waterbury Train Station. WHS is partnering with Revitalizing Waterbury in the project. The refresh will be an "annex" of sorts for WHS and will highlight Waterbury history and as a visitor center. The project will be completed in early May. Jack also mentioned that the museum will be open the last Saturday of June, July, August and September.

Betty Jones thanked the Legion for preparing and serving the dinner. She also mentioned that the annual Ghost Walk will be held in Hope Cemetery on May 28<sup>th</sup> (Memorial Day) at 11 AM and will be a remembrance of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic. She also prepared a wonderful display of 60 years of WHS and encouraged everyone to take time to look at it after the program.

Jane Willard is retiring from the Board of Directors after many years of service. She was recognized and thanked with a gift certificate from Evergreen Gardens which was wrapped in a beautiful hand woven towel made by Jan Gendreau.

Betty Jones turned the program over to David Luce who was master of ceremonies of the power point presentation "Celebrating 60 Years of the Waterbury Historical Society". Using photographs and memorabilia from the archives, Barb Farr and Jack Carter compiled the tribute to the society.

After the presentation Jane Willard, Jill Chase and Cindy Parks recalled the roles their parents played in the early days of the society. Betty Jones read a remembrance by Brian Lindner of his mother's role in the society.

Meredith Wood Rogers was in attendance and recognized and being a charter member. Lindy Boudreau prepared a nice handout of interesting articles celebrating the past 60 years.

John Malter mentioned that the NQID celebration will be on June 30 and perhaps the Society might do a float for the parade. This year the parade begins at 4PM and all the festivities will be held in the Village and at the State Complex.

Al Lewis mentioned that Sandy, his wife, visited Florilla Ames and that she is doing well at the age of 107.

The meeting ended around 8:30.

## SUBMIT CONTENT

To submit a letter to the editor, stories, or photos for an upcoming issue, email the editor at [dulcinea28@gmail.com](mailto:dulcinea28@gmail.com) or send by post to:  
Dr. Cheryl Casey, 1389 Kneeland Flats Rd., Waterbury Center, VT 05677.

Quarterly submission deadlines: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15

# The C.B.I. Theatre of War- China, Burma, India

By Calvin Dow

World War II, 1942. The U.S. Army and Air Corps and Sgt. Dow arrive in India. The Japanese Army occupied all of China except the southwest bordering the Himalayan Mountains - which we called the "Hump." They also captured the Burma Road, the only ground route into China.

We were forced to fly supplies and planes over the treacherous Hump to Kunming, China. Also, we were building the new Ledo Road because before the war ended, 509 cargo planes crashed and 1,314 Americans are still buried in the ice and snow of that mighty mountain.



**Clockwise, from top right: The author, Sgt. Calvin Dow, preparing to fly from India to China in 1942; insignia of the China-Burma-India Theater in WWII; the Hump Pilots Association referred to the Allied pilots in WWII who flew military transport aircraft over the eastern end of the Himalayan Mountains into China. (Photos courtesy of Calvin Dow.)**



**Above: Construction on the Ledo Road from Assam, India to where it connected to the Burma Road in Burma (Photo: pacificparatrooper.wordpress.com). General Stilwell of the U.S. Army oversaw the construction. The road cost about \$150 million (US) to build and was expected to allow for the delivery of 65,000 tons of supplies per month.**

## Ode to War, 1945

**By Calvin Dow**

The Gateway to India at Bombay.  
 Is it as beautiful as they say?  
 Don't rightly know, Ma'am.  
 Did my part breaking point in the jungle's heart.  
 Blasted the boulders, filled the trees  
 With red muck oozin' around our knees.  
 Carved the guts from Pataki's side,  
 Dozed our trace, made it clear and wide,  
 Metalled and graded, dug and filled.  
 We had the Ledo Road to build.

But surely you say a burning Ghat,  
 Fakirs, Rope Tricks and all of that?  
 Recond I didn't. But way up ahead  
 I tended the wounded, buried the dead.  
 For I was a medic, and little we knew  
 But the smell of sickness all day through.  
 Mosquitoes, leeches and thick black mud  
 Where the Japanese had spilled their blood.  
 After the enemy guns were stilled  
 We had the Ledo Road to build.

But surely you found the Taj Majal  
 The loveliest building of them all?  
 Can't remember, Lady, 'cause I was stuck  
 Far beyond Shing with a quartermaster truck.  
 Monsoon was rugged there, hot and wet,  
 Nothing to do but work and sweat.  
 So dry was the dust upon my mouth,  
 As the mighty "Cats" roared on south.  
 Over the ground where the Japs lay killed.  
 We had the Ledo Road to build.

But you've been gone five years this Spring.  
 Didn't you see a single thing?  
 Never say much but the moon shine on  
 A Burmese Temple around Maingkan.  
 And silver transports high in the sky,  
 Thursday River and the swift Tanai,  
 And Hukawang Valley coming all green.  
 There are the only sights I've seen.  
 Did our job, thought, 'cause the Creator willed.  
 We had the Ledo Road to build.



**Left: The Ledo Road, intended to be the primary supply route between India and China during WWII. (Photo: discover-newer-horizons.blogspot.com)**  
**Below: Local laborers toil to construct the Ledo Road. About 35,000 locals worked on the road. (Photo: www.militaryhistoryonline.com)**



## Featured Figure: Florence Lindner

### Mom, History Buff, Storyteller, and WHS Treasurer

By Brian Lindner

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is excerpted from the spring program presentation. Mrs. Lindner once served as Treasurer of the Historical Society. She passed away at the age of 90 in August of 2016. The author, son Brian, is an active member of WHS and has given many presentations to the Society about topics in local history.*

From my earliest days I think my interest in history was sparked by my mother. I can remember many, many times when she would point out historic buildings, farms or other locations. I especially remember her pointing out locations related to the CCC in Stowe and Waterbury. She usually began each story with, "Well, in the olden days....."

One story she told many times was when in the 1930s her father (Claude Adams) was leading his team into the barn and the floor collapsed. She was a young girl

and watched in terror as her father jumped down between the panicked horses and cut their harnesses.

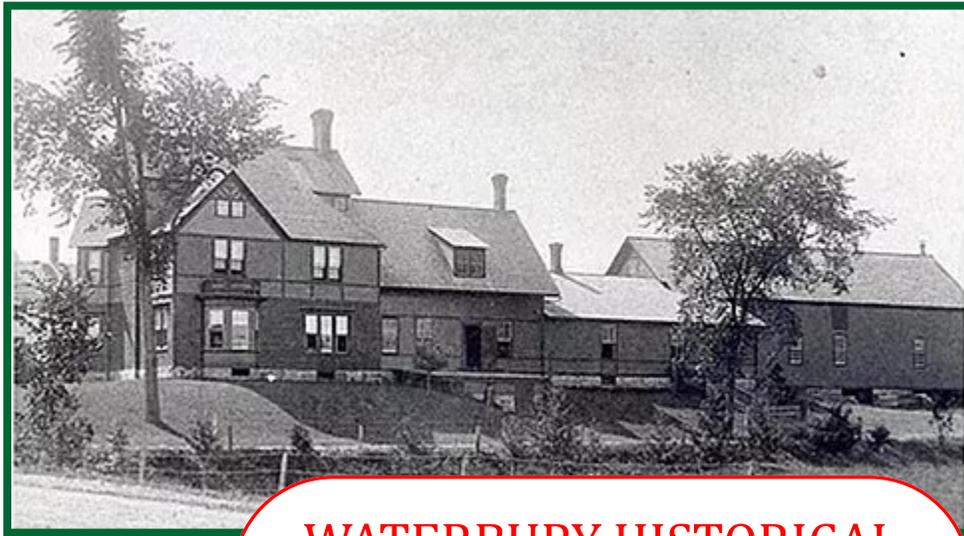
In later life she was riding with me when we drove by that barn in Stowe Hollow and she immediately launched into the story as if it had happened yesterday.



**Florence Lindner**

Most of my early knowledge about Cotton Brook and Little River came from her stories of growing up and being displaced by the new dam. On her last hike in the woods we walked into that old farmstead and she pointed out various features such as the tiny knoll on which she and her sisters played King of the Hill.

When I asked her if she would be interested in being Treasurer for the Historical Society she agreed without a moment's hesitation. She was a self-taught bookkeeper and used her talents for many years maintaining our books.



## WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORY CENTER

The History Center is open **Monday—Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Located on the second floor of the Municipal Building in the newly renovated Dr. Janes house, the museum is free and open to the public. The Historical Society's vast collections rotate through the exhibits, which are carefully assembled by our Curator. Stop by and learn something new about Waterbury's place in Vermont and national history!

### History Center Acquisition Criteria

**Have something to donate to the museum? See if your item(s) meet these criteria:**

- *Relevance:* Well-documented link to the town of Waterbury.
- *Non-duplication:* Unique to the existing holdings of the collection.
- *Duration:* Intent is to officially add the item to the collection for the WHS to keep or sell (where proceeds will only go to benefit the Society).
- *Title and Provenance:* Deed of gift or bill of sale should accompany all items.
- *Restrictions:* Items will not be held by the donor to criteria about use, display, or future disposition.
- *Physical condition:* No extensive conservation required.
- *Rights:* Transfer of item(s) includes all pertinent rights (literary, property, copyright, etc.).
- *Costs:* Management and care of item(s) should be financially viable for the Society, or dedicated funds should accompany the donation of the item(s).
- *Tax law compliance:* Gifts must be in compliance with applicable tax law.

**For more information or to begin the donation process, contact:  
[archivistwhs@gmail.com](mailto:archivistwhs@gmail.com)**



**Donations Welcome** - We are a community organization that deeply appreciates the support and interest of our community. You can donate online at our website below.

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

\$10 per person

\$15 per family (couple and children under 18)

*(Check the mailing label on your newsletter to see when your membership expires.)*

### **Please help the Historical Society GO GREEN!**

Contact us to opt for email-only delivery. Benefits include cost-saving, paper-saving, and a newsletter in color!



**[waterburyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:waterburyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)**

**[www.waterburyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.waterburyhistoricalsociety.org)**

**FB: [@waterburyhistoricalsocietyVT](https://www.facebook.com/waterburyhistoricalsocietyVT)**

**Waterbury Historical Society, Inc.**

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## **About Us**

**Board of Directors** - Stephen Van Esen, Jack Carter, Jan Gendreau

**President** - Barbara Farr

**Vice President** - Jim Walton

**Secretary** - Cheryl Casey

**Treasurer** - Paul Willard

**Archivist** - Tracy Haerther

**Assistant Archivist** - Jill Chase

**Curator** - Jack Carter

**Program Committee** - Betty Jones, Camille Mason, Anne Imhoff, Cheryl Casey, Betsy Ayers Shapiro

**Outreach Education Committee** - Jane Willard, Grace Sweet, Skip Flanders, Diane Gardener

**Newsletter Editor & Facebook Community Manager** - Cheryl Casey

**Webmaster** - Paul Willard

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